

SF Bay Grant Program: LID Talking Points – July 2010

LID Background

LID practices are widely recognized to have begun in Prince George's County, Maryland in 1990 as an alternative to traditional stormwater best management practices. LID developed in response to findings that the traditional practices (e.g., detention ponds and retention basins) were not cost-effective and the results did not meet water quality goals. LID emphasizes conservation and use of on-site natural features to protect water quality. This approach implements engineered small-scale hydrologic controls to replicate the pre-development hydrologic regime of watersheds through infiltrating, filtering, storing, evaporating, and detaining runoff close to its source. LID benefits include:

- Habitat protection
- Water quality improvements
- Reduction of impervious surfaces and runoff (peak flow volume and rate)
- Community value (i.e. increased aesthetics)
- Groundwater recharge through infiltration
- Improved management of water quantity (e.g. reduced risk of flooding)
- Cost savings.

EPA is actively promoting more widespread use of LID as a method to help meet goals of the Clean Water Act through permitting, incentives and partnerships.

LID in SF Bay

Region 9 has recently succeeded in advocating LID requirements into several new stormwater permits in California, including a Stormwater NPDES Permit in October 2009 which covers the Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, San Mateo and Santa Clara, and the Cities of Fairfield, Suisun City, and Vallejo. This permit's LID provisions are intended to reduce stormwater runoff and mimic predevelopment hydrology for significant new development and redevelopment projects. The permit also requires the completion of ten Green Street *Pilot projects* incorporating LID techniques and documenting associated water quality benefits.

Most Bay Area and other California communities are in the early phases of adopting LID and need to develop the expertise and institutional capacities to more widely utilize LID practices. By contrast, Portland and Seattle are widely recognized to be ahead of the Bay Area in more widely utilizing LID.

The competitive grant program that began in 2008 as the result of a congressional appropriation to support water quality improvement projects for the SF Bay is playing a role to help communities begin to utilize LID practices. Since 2008, \$17 million has been appropriated and projects are now underway to restore polluted waters, and protect and restore wetlands and riparian corridors. *To foster the use of LID, we specifically encouraged proposals that:*

- involved entities with purview over water quality and land use decisions;
 - addressed “retrofitting” (not covered by permits); and
 - remove barriers to widespread utilization of innovative practices.
- To date approximately \$3 million have been committed to support LID projects.

Our aim is to help establish the Bay Area as a recognized leader in LID and green infrastructure. Grant funded LID projects are necessary now to help develop the local expertise and institutional arrangements that communities need to move ahead. More widespread utilization of LID

practices will ultimately rely on much more extensive funding from sources such as SRF and local user fees.